
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	1529 16th Street, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	16th Street Historic District		Consent Calendar
		X	Concept Review
Meeting Date:	November 16, 2017	X	Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	17-664		New Construction
			Demolition

The Edlavitch DC Jewish Community Center, with plans prepared by Perkins Eastman Architects, seeks conceptual design review for construction of an exterior stair and elevator, new window openings on the rear elevation, and expansion of a penthouse.

Property History and Description

The Neoclassical styled building Jewish Community Center was constructed in 1926 at the corner of 16th and Q Streets NW, and was designed by Washington architect B. Stanley Simmons. The limestone-clad building features a columned portico facing 16th Street accessed by a monumental stair. The building's primary entrance today is on Q Street.

Simmons was a prolific designer who designed hundreds of buildings in Washington, and his work encompassed a wide variety of styles and building types, including banks, hotels, apartment houses, commercial buildings, schools, clubs, churches, rectories, theaters, residences, automobile showrooms, a civic center, and schools. Some of his major commissions included the National Metropolitan Bank on 15th Street, NW (1905-07), the Elks Club on H Street, NW (1906), the Jewish Community Center (1926), the U.S. Storage Building on 10th Street, NW, and the Fairfax Hotel at 2100 Massachusetts Avenue, NW (1924).

The building is contributing to the Dupont Circle and 16th Street Historic Districts.

Proposal

The project calls for interior renovations, constructing a stair and elevator on the rear (east) elevation, adding windows on the rear elevation flanking the new stair tower, and expanding the existing penthouse to add an event space. A terrace would wrap around the front (west) and side (north) of the event room.

The stair tower would be clad in glass and the elevator shaft would be clad in limestone. A bank of windows to the north and south of the stair would be added to replicate the existing windows on the building; the brick wall to the north of the new stair would be finished with limestone.

The penthouse would be clad in stucco with a limestone finish and would have an aluminum storefront system with a large opening facing west and a wall of storefront facing north. The west facing window would have a projecting sun screen canopy. The outside edge of the event

space would be 12' tall on the north and west (and set 2' above the roof), and rise to a height of 16' with a setback.

The roof terrace would be constructed 2 feet above the existing roof and have a 42" high glass guardrail.

Evaluation

The rear stair/elevator and window alterations do not affect character-defining features of the building and are compatible in size, height, and placement. As this aspect of the design continues to be refined, the extent and tint of glazing and the type of lighting required should be evaluated for its impact at night. The stair will face and be seen along a residential street, and the night time light levels should be developed so that this feature isn't visually incongruous.

The expansion of the penthouse will increase its visibility (as shown in the images in the submission, the existing mechanical penthouse is already visible), and the new terrace railing will also be seen. Unlike the existing penthouse, which is entirely solid, the wide expanses of glazing and the projecting sun screen will also be evident. While some visibility of penthouse is not uncharacteristic on this type of institutional building, the extent of glazing and the projection feel foreign on this otherwise staid building and out of character for a penthouse structure.

Two alternatives are recommended for improving the compatibility of the proposal. One is to reduce the visibility of the penthouse by pulling it back further on both the north and west at least to the point where the wide expanses of glazing are no longer seen. Alternatively, a pattern of openings for the penthouse could be developed that more closely relates to the underlying building. This was the approach the Board found compatible for the Carlton Hotel on lower 16th Street, in which it was acknowledged that the penthouse would be seen and the design developed to specifically relate to the underlying building. In either approach, the guard railing should be pulled further back (or the roof terrace lowered if structurally possible) to ensure that this feature will not hover over the roofline.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept for the rear alterations, with the condition that the extent of night time lighting of the stair be minimized, and that the penthouse expansion and roof terrace continue to be studied as outlined above.

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